



Agenda Item:

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COUNCIL COMMUNICATION City Manager's Office

GENERAL INFORMATION

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Communication

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No.:

Submitted by: Larry Hulse
Community Development Department Director

Jeb Brewer,
City Engineer

SUBJECT—

Changes to Sections 26-1120 and 26-1152 related to Sewer Construction.

SYNOPSIS—

This is a change to the local Plumbing Code ordinance related to when a licensed plumbing contractor and plumbing permits are required for sewer stubs that are under the general jurisdiction of the City Engineer. Presently the code does not require a license or a permit when the stubs are constructed up to the property line. This change will allow the stub to be constructed beyond the property line, in accordance with Urban Design Standards, by the sewer contractor and not require a permit, if it is included under the standard specification and jurisdiction of the City Engineer.

FISCAL IMPACT—

This will have a minor impact to plumbing permit revenues due to the fact that plumbing permits will no longer be required.

RECOMMENDATION—

Approval

BACKGROUND—

Presently the Urban Design Standards require that when new sewer projects are constructed for new subdivisions, that the sewer services be stubbed into the building lots a minimum of 10 feet into the property and beyond the right-of-way. Sewer stubs are lateral sections of the sewer service that run from a sewer-main to a building lot. Attached is a graphical explanation. This is a common practice in the metro area and is required to prevent having to excavate into the right-of-way area when sewer services are connected from a new home.

The Des Moines Plumbing Code regulates plumbing not only within a building, but also the services to the point of a tap to the Public Sewer or Water Main. Sections 26-1120 and 26-1152 are existing sections of the Plumbing Code of the Des Moines Municipal Code that indicate when licensed plumbing contractors and plumbing permits are required. Presently these sections include exceptions (26-1120-b and 26-1152-b2) that do not require licensed plumbing contractors or plumbing permits for sewer stubs that are part of new sewer project and are under the control of City Engineer, when the stubs are constructed to the property line. When the stubs are constructed beyond the property line, the code presently requires licensed contractors and permits. When permits are required then these stubs are required to be inspected by the inspection staff of the Permit and Development Center.

During the construction of a public sewer project the Engineering Department's Construction Inspection staff also inspects the sewer mains, as well as the placement of these stubs. In the case of sewer stubs that are located into the new building lots the minimum of 10 feet, which is now required by the Urban Design Standards, these stubs are being inspected twice. In addition, this requires the sewer contractor to have a licensed plumbing contractor obtain a permit and install this portion of the stub.

Des Moines seems to be the only community that requires permits and inspections to this degree and this does appear to be a redundancy in services. It is the opinion of the Building Official and the City Engineer that this activity can be inspected effectively by the Engineering Department's Construction Inspection staff at the same time the sewer project is being inspected. This would eliminate the redundancy of inspections in this area, as well as relieve an already overloaded plumbing inspection staff, enabling them to attend to other plumbing inspection demands.